



THE CITY OF GROTON

Building & Zoning Department

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Testimony of Carlton Smith, Building and Zoning Official of the City of Groton, in support of **Raised Bill No. 5179, An Act Authorizing Historic Properties Commissions to Charge Reasonable Fees for the Processing of Certificate of Appropriateness Applications.**

On behalf of the City of Groton, I am pleased to provide testimony in favor of Bill 5179. In addition to my role as Building and Zoning Official, I'm also the staff for the Eastern Point Historic District. This act would allow municipalities like the City of Groton to charge reasonable fees to help cover those costs incurred by municipalities related to applications to Historic District Commissions.

- At present there is no cost associated with a Historic District application should a property owner, or their representative, want to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a project to be constructed within public view. The municipality has to accept the application and advertise in the local paper.
- The approximate cost of the advertisements for Legal Notices, for a minimally-worded advertisement, in The New London Day Newspaper, can cost from \$150.00 upwards. The price of the advertisement goes up as verbiage is increased, due to the project size.
- Should the applicant fail to appear at the meeting, the monies from advertising the legal notices are then lost. Should the same applicant come in the following month and begin the application process again, the municipality is then paying again for legal notices to be published, again at the municipality's expense. For the volunteers that have committed to staffing the Commission, this is also a total loss of their time, should the applicant be the only one on the Agenda. The money that municipalities put forth publishing legal notices, both prior to, and after, an applicant's hearing is unfair to the taxpayers. In the City of Groton, this has happened on more occasions than we care to discuss.

Adding the provision to allow municipalities to recover the cost of processing applications will help to insure the applicant appears at the scheduled hearing, as well as not wasting volunteer and paid staff time and effort to ensure compliance with State Statue. I urge you to support House Bill No. 5179.

Sincerely

Carlton M. Smith
Building and Zoning Official